

**Planning Commission Comments from the October 7, 2014 Meeting
Erwin Terrace at LaSalle Street, A1300010**

Mr. Buzby	<p>I appreciate the additional information provided by the applicant and the Planning Department detailing the current affordable housing with a ½ mile of the proposed LaSalle Transit Station.</p> <p>The Planning Department has indicated this analysis will be provided in the future for all future development proposals. This is greatly appreciated and critical for the Planning Commission as we assess future proposals. Without this information provided in advance, I will be inclined to postpone a decision until this information is available.</p> <p>Given that this plan amendment and concurrent zoning map change meet all key requirements, including taking place within a ½ mile of a future transit station that currently has 79.5% affordable housing, I vote to approve this proposal.</p> <p>However, I do have long-term concerns that as a development continues there will be pressure on housing prices and that the amount of affordable housing will decrease. To meet the adopted goal of 15% affordable housing within a ½ mile of a proposed transit station over the long-term, we will need to be vigilant. For example, only 12.75% of current housing by the LaSalle transit station is subsidized housing that can withstand upward price trends over time. We need to make sure we meet our 15% goal and more subsidized housing can ensure we meet this goal.</p>
Mr. Davis	Move approval.
Mr. Gibbs	I approve this development. (See Note at Z1300031: A positive influence economically & service to residents of varied affordability status.)
Mr. Harris	Voted to approve.
Ms. Hyman	<p>“15% goal met” in LaSalle area for affordable housing which was the only outstanding issue. All other elements of the Comprehensive Plan have been meet.</p> <p>“First Class” mixed used development planned more than 15% affordable housing goal has been met. Staff indicates that the number is closer to 80%.</p> <p>Housing needs assessment by Planning Department currently underway, which will more effectively address the City’s issue of providing Affordable Housing.</p> <p>Project has positives of creating jobs and adding to the much needed tax base.</p>
Mr. Padgett	Awesome Development! Approve 100%
Mr. Whitley	I voted to approve.

Mr. Miller

This case is not only a plan amendment, but a rezoning. Because the matter includes the adjustment of the tier boundary, the effect of voting for this request changes the regulations governing land use in the affected area. In future, tier boundary changes should not be treated as comprehensive plan amendments.

I voted against this plan amendment and tier boundary change for two principal reasons. First, as the applicants stated in their original argument to the commission in August, the effect of moving the compact neighborhood tier boundary to take in their property and the properties nearby is to create a new compact neighborhood tier around a possible new transit station which was not contemplated when the UDO was adopted in 2006. I agree that this is what their proposal does. It is not merely a request to enlarge the compact neighborhood tier to the east to include the applicants' project. Compact neighborhood tiers should not be created piecemeal using the rezoning process. Under our UDO, a compact neighborhood tier is supposed to be centered upon a transit station. Regulations within the tier generally are the most permissive in our regulatory scheme. A compact neighborhood tier should be established only through a comprehensive, and thoughtful process involving the resources of the Planning, Public Works, Transportation, Parks and Recreation, Housing and other departments along with the principal stakeholders in the area. The process should consider the optimum boundaries of the tier and the zoning of the properties within the tier. No such process has happened here. The city council should resist the creation of any new compact neighborhood tier that does not undergo a more comprehensive planning process. I do not believe that handling this issue this way is good planning or consistent with Durham's comprehensive plan.

The second reason I voted against the tier boundary change has to do with the need to provide affordable housing near transit stations. I read the council's May resolution on affordable housing to mean that in the target transit areas, there will be a certain percentage of housing reserved for persons and families making 60% AMI or below. I do not think the council intended its stated goals to be satisfied by the temporary availability of housing at a market rate near or below the 60% AMI rate. As the staff noted in its report, merely changing this tier boundary and rezoning the applicants' property will tend to drive area rents up. The market will not provide a reliable and steady supply of affordable housing reserved for those who need it. We must develop effective public policies to do this. Until we do, we should not up-zone all the available housing sites near transit stations. If we do up-zone them with no commitment for affordability, we will create another Ninth Street situation. I will remind the council that by this time next year there will be approximately 1200 rental units in the compact neighborhood tier surrounding the proposed Ninth Street Station. The lowest

rent among these units will be approximately \$1,100 per month for a studio apartment of less than 1000 sq. ft. If we create a new compact neighborhood tier on Erwin at LaSalle and rezone the property within the new tier to permit hundreds of new dwelling units without effective affordable housing policies in place, we will wind up with another Ninth Street. Are we not smart enough to avoid making the same mistake twice in rapid succession? The tools are available. We do not have to invent any new wheels. If we do not stop giving away the zoning with no return on our identified public goals, the ordinary people who live pay check to pay check will be pushed away from the transit system we are working hard to create. To reach their jobs in the transit areas they will have to drive their cars and pay to park. Because their homes will be located in parts of town which will not benefit from the economic stimulation created by intense development allowed near the transit stations, their home and transportation financial burdens will go up as costs are shifted to them. The time to get serious about affordable housing is now.